

### **REMARKS**

In the Office Action, claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0194634 in view of Kamp (U.S. Patent No. 4,992,642). Claims 1-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP 0194634 in view of Kamp (U.S. Patent No. 4,992,642), further in view of Bernard et al. 3,597,576.

The disclosure of EP 634 is limited to a very thin coating applied by a vacuum deposition process. The thickness of so formed layers or coatings are in the range of some microns and may be smaller than the size of embedded particles with respect of the invention.

A layer or coating are not integrated inside of a basic part like a nozzle and is not able to fill a volume proportion of at least 0.5 % with respect to the mentioned layer thickness of some microns.

The nitriding process mentioned by the Examiner is a completely different and not suitable method for forming the inventive nozzle. There is no such disclosure in EP 634. By nitriding nitrogen will be introduced into the surface of a material. In metallurgy it is used for hardening of a material at the surface. The formation of microparticles inside of a metal or metal alloy is not possible by nitriding.

Whether the disclosure of Kamps nor the disclosure of Bernhard are suitable to anticipate the invention, Kamps concerns a plasma torch formed from two different parts. These parts are a cylindrical holder 3 made of brass and a nozzle 5 completely made of boron carbide.

The heat shield disclosed in Bernhard is formed of a nonelectrically conductive material alone or it is composed of two tubes. The first tube is completely formed of a nonelectrically conductive material alone and the second tube may be composed of a metal or carbide as an outer shell of such a heating shield.

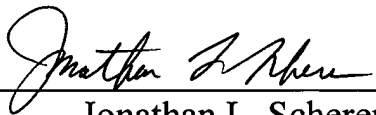
There is no disclosure for using a nozzle material formed of a metal or an alloy including wear resistant microparticles made of a completely different hard material.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should now be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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